



# Kentucky Fish & Wildlife Commissioner's NEWSLETTER

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Kentucky State Police and a Grayson County deputy sheriff are crediting Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation Officer Greg Youree with

## KDFWR Officer Youree credited with saving lives after Parkway crash

saving the lives of two automobile accident victims Thursday night, January 10, on the Western Kentucky Parkway near Leitchfield.

Youree, returning home to Graves County after serving as part of the Fish and Wildlife Honor Guard at the annual Legislative Wild Game Dinner in Frankfort, happened upon a burning, overturned pickup near the 111 mile marker.

Youree was the first to come upon the scene of the accident according to Kentucky State Trooper Seth Lee. "The truck was on fire. He used a fire extinguisher to put out the truck fire," news reports quoted Lee as saying.

"Without a question he saved the lives

of those two guys trapped in the truck," said Sheriff's Deputy Mike Colvin.

Tony Rhodes, 47, of Falls of Rough, was traveling eastbound on the WK Parkway when he lost control of his vehicle. He was thrown from the vehicle and pinned beneath it after it left the roadway, traveled down an embankment, struck a tree and then overturned, reported Lee.

A passenger, David Beville, 43, was partially ejected from the truck and trapped under it as well.

Youree, traveling west, saw two vehicles stopped in the eastbound emergency lane and slowed for a closer look. It was

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## NEW LAW ENFORCEMENT CAPTAINS PROMOTED



Larry Ashford (left center) and Todd Rogers (right center) are the new law enforcement captains in the First and Fourth Districts, respectively. Commissioner Jon Gassett and Colonel Bob Milligan made the promotions in Frankfort last month.

## Annual legislative Wild Game Dinner held



Commissioner Jon Gassett and Sgt. Jim Gibson, President of the Conservation Officers Association, greeted Lt. Gov. Daniel Mongiardo at the Wild Game Dinner (above photo). Outside, current and retired employees kept a grill covered with elk rumake at the Wild Game Dinner. From left are Mac Warren, Willie Amburgey and Doug Wehr.

### ANOTHER KIND OF WILD GAME DINNER

*Kentucky Afield* writer and photographer Hayley Lynch snapped this interesting photo this week of a Red-tailed hawk and its fresh kill near the Salato Wildlife Education Center at Headquarters in Frankfort.





## KY CREP wins the 2007 Two Chiefs' Partnership Award

Kentucky's Green River Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) project is one of five recipients of the 2007 Two Chiefs' Partnership Award.

The Two Chiefs' Partnership Award is presented by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Chief Arlen Lancaster and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Chief Gail Kimball. The award is given to projects demonstrating successful collaboration between State, Federal and local partners and that are having a positive impact on conservation and forest stewardship.

Kentucky's CREP targets agriculture-related environmental concerns in the Upper Green River Watershed. This is Kentucky's first designated CREP area, and holds the distinction of being the largest conservation program designed to protect a unique and biologically diverse watershed in the State's history. So far, the partnership has reached two-thirds of its objectives for enrolling land and is beginning to have a landscape level impact.

As part of this award the following KDFWR staff members have been recognized for their CREP contribution:

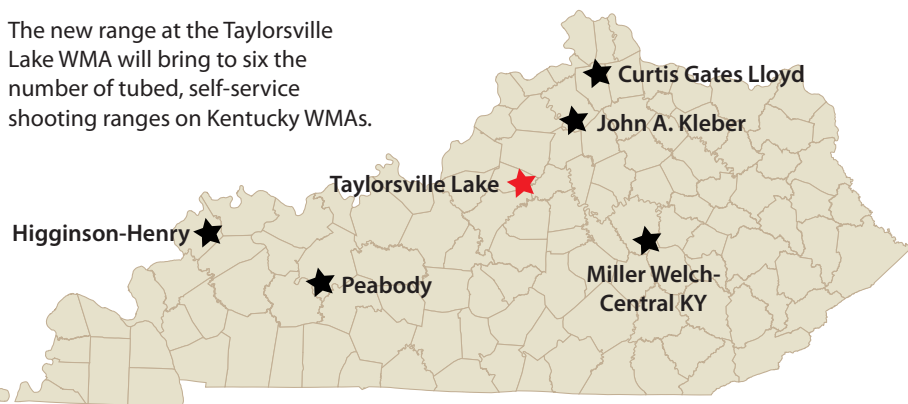


Steve Beam, Eric Copas, Chris Garland, Jason Keenan, Charles Kitts, Bill Lynch, Chris Mason, Jonah Price, and Kevin Raymond. Several other KDFWR staff members have worked on this project and we appreciate everyone's help to make this project so successful.

KY CREP Partners include: KY Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, KY Division of Conservation, KY Division of Forestry, NRCS, the Farm Service Agency, The Nature Conservancy; and 14 local conservation districts.

## New shooting range planned for Taylorsville Lake WMA in 2008

The new range at the Taylorsville Lake WMA will bring to six the number of tubed, self-service shooting ranges on Kentucky WMAs.



Wildlife and Engineering staff have worked together in preparation for a new tubed shooting range that will be built on

the Taylorsville Lake Wildlife Management Area.

The process for gaining approval

for the project involved numerous steps, including A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers review, an archaeological survey and a historical records review.

The TLWMA shooting range will be the fourth in the Bluegrass Region (sixth statewide), and will have six shooting benches with target shooting up to 100 yards.

Wildlife Assistant Director David McChesney wrote the grant to obtain funds for the project, and biologist Tom Edwards and TLWMA foreman Bill Mitchell worked with the Engineering Division, the Corps of Engineers and the Heritage Council staff to complete all necessary preliminary work.

**"Officer," continued**

then that he saw the Rhodes vehicle overturned and on fire in a deep ditch.

He activated his emergency lights and crossed the median. A woman was yelling that people were still in the burning vehicle. As he exited his own vehicle and retrieved a large fire extinguisher, he could hear shouting from the wrecked vehicle as well. Six-foot high flames burned from beneath the front of the wrecked vehicle.

As Youree approached the burning vehicle, he could see that the earlier heavy rainfall had left the ditch full of fast-running water, and that a small tree was holding it up out of the ditch. The route to the fire was across the tree and burning vehicle. He maneuvered across the tree and vehicle and used the extinguisher to put out the fire.

He injured his back and knee during this climb.

The Leitchfield and Clarkson Fire Departments responded and removed the injured driver and passenger.

Clarkson Fire Chief Andy Cain called removing the victims from the wreck, "the hardest and most technical extraction of my career as a firefighter. They were both trapped in and under the truck in such a way that if we took pressure off one by moving the truck one way, it might further injure the other one and if shifted the weight the other way it might have been fatal for the driver."

They were air-lifted to the University of Louisville Hospital and listed in critical condition. Youree was transported to Twin Lakes Regional Medical Center where he was treated for muscular injuries and released. Colvin, a former KDFWR conservation officer, invited him to stay overnight in his home.

Later, Youree gave credit to a lecture by KDFWR Sgt. Rex Burkhead about patrol vehicle equipment for his having the large fire extinguisher handy.



Clockwise from left: Brenda Ward-Hill, Phillip Williams, Tia Edwards, Jeff Spalding, Rob Anderson and Tanya Wilson.

## **KDFWR Information Center answers 100,000+ calls annually**

One caller demanded to know why the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources was stocking kangaroos. Another caller wanted to know if a snake that had just crawled out of her toilet was a water moccasin. Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's Information Center receives a variety of calls ranging from the mundane to the truly bizarre.

At many places, these callers might still be endlessly punching numbers on a telephone menu while trying to talk to a living, breathing human being. That is not the case at Kentucky Fish and Wildlife, where one of six employees from the Information Center staff answers each incoming call. "I had one woman say that she was surprised to be talking to a real person," said Tanya Wilson, the newest member of the Information Center staff. "She was expecting to talk to a computer."

Brenda Ward-Hill oversees a group that last year answered more than 109,000 telephone calls, mailed over 46,000 letters and packages and answered more than 6,200

e-mails. It's the goal of Information Center staff - Ward-Hill, Wilson, Tia Edwards, Rob Anderson, Jeff Spalding and Phillip "Mississippi" Williams - to provide answers without transferring the telephone call.

It's a job that requires problem-solving abilities ("How do I get a raccoon out of my attic?"), knowledge of fish and wildlife laws ("Can I squirrel hunt out of a boat on Lake Cumberland?"), familiarity with hunting and fishing ("I'm coming from Pennsylvania to deer hunt in Kentucky this weekend - where should I go to get a Boone and Crockett buck?") and some diplomacy ("I want a free calendar - let me talk to the commissioner").

Not all callers are happy with the answers, especially those who learn that Kentucky Fish and Wildlife does not own the state deer herd and does not pay for deer damage to their vehicles. But they do receive the kind of old-fashioned customer service through the Information Center that is becoming more difficult to find these days.



## Cedar Creek Lake five years after impoundment



Fisheries Division Assistant Director Ryan Oster shows off a memorable Cedar Creek Lake Largemouth.

Cedar Creek Lake was the result of a "model" long-term cooperation project between the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR), the Kentucky Department of Transportation, and the Lincoln County Fiscal Court.

The project was first conceived in the 1980's during the planning of a new U.S. Highway 150 alignment in eastern Lincoln County. Cedar Creek Lake was dedicated on September 4, 2002, and the lake reached full pool elevation by January 2003. The \$8.5 million project resulted in the creation of a 784-acre recreational fishing and boating lake.

Cedar Creek Lake's fish management focus has been for trophy largemouth bass. Three year-classes of largemouth bass were stocked in the spring of 2003 to serve as the initial stock of bass. Growth of these largemouth bass was rapid and provided an immediate recreational fishery. Many anglers commonly reported daily catches of 25-50 fish.

In 2004, as a result of public interest

and acceptance, the KDFWR enacted a 20-inch minimum size limit and a one fish daily creel to establish the trophy fishery. The 2008 fishing season will represent five years post-impoundment and four years of trophy largemouth bass management.

So how is the Commonwealth's first trophy bass fishery?

Catch of trophy largemouth bass larger than 20 inches during electrofishing samples first occurred in the spring

of 2006.

By 2007, catch of trophy largemouth bass increased 34-fold, and is also expected to increase in 2008 and 2009.

The majority of bass larger than 20 inches are the result of the initial year stockings in the spring of 2003.

The catch of largemouth bass smaller than 20 inches developed rapidly following the initial stocking. Fifteen inch and larger bass were collected in the spring of 2004 and increased seven-fold by 2005.

The bass population's growth is now beginning to stabilize. An exceptionally strong year-class of largemouth bass was produced in 2004, while average to slightly below average year-classes were produced in 2005 and 2006.

A creel and angler attitude survey was conducted in 2005 at Cedar Creek Lake to collect information from anglers about the KDFWR's effort to manage this trophy fishery.

Astonishingly, 98 percent of all bass anglers were satisfied with the largemouth bass fishery at Cedar Creek Lake. Additionally, 98 percent of bass anglers stated they supported the 20-inch minimum size limit.

Largemouth bass catch rates were highest in the fall (September and October) and lowest in the spring (April and

**See "Cedar Creek Lake," page 7**



## Preliminary results of stocking the Ohio River

Without question, when most tournament and recreational fishermen think about largemouth bass, reservoirs like Kentucky Lake, Lake Barkley, and Barren River Lake come to mind. However, the Ohio River represents a unique largemouth bass fishery that has become extremely popular in recent years.

Unfortunately, studies have shown that abundance of largemouth bass in the Ohio River is low compared to Kentucky's lakes and reservoirs. Despite their relative lower abundance, growth rates of largemouth bass in the Ohio River are equal to and often exceed that of lake populations.

Largemouth bass populations in the Ohio River are limited by varying water levels, extreme sedimentation of backwater habitat, limited spawning habitat, loss of backwater/nursery habitat, and limited food resources.

In June of 2007, fisheries research biologists Doug Henley and Chris Hickey began the first year of a three year stocking study of largemouth bass in the Markland Pool of the Ohio River. The goal of this study is to determine if hatchery-produced largemouth bass stocking offsets poor recruitment of largemouth bass in the Ohio River, and whether it is a cost effective management strategy.

Approximately 200,000 (2 inch) largemouth bass fingerlings were stocked in 16 embayments on both the Indiana and Kentucky portions of the Markland Pool.

Fish were stocked in embayments at approximately 100 bass per acre. All



stocked largemouth bass were marked with a fluorescent chemical to distinguish them from largemouth bass produced naturally in the Markland Pool.

The study will continue an additional three years after the last stocking of fingerlings in order to follow the growth, survival, and contribution of these stocked year-classes to the sport fishery at ages 1-3 (largemouth bass in the Ohio River reach the statewide minimum size limit of 12 inches at age 3).

The overall success of this study will depend on a number of factors including the river's carrying capacity, water levels, production of forage resources, habitat (including both spawning, nursery, and adult habitat), and environmental conditions during the spawning period and growing period.

Preliminary results from the first stocking of fingerling largemouth bass have shown promising results. The severe drought in 2007 resulted in relatively low flows throughout the Ohio River. As a result, water clarity improved dramatically which aided the development and growth

of aquatic vegetation (which serves as nursery and foraging habitat).

In addition, the production of forage fish species was exceptional this year, providing available forage for stocked largemouth bass. Unfortunately, a strong cold spell, which occurred during the spawning period of largemouth bass on the Ohio River, most likely limited the production of natural largemouth bass fingerlings in the Ohio River.

Fall electrofishing surveys of newly-spawned largemouth bass found good survival of stocked largemouth bass. Growth of these young bass was phenomenal, with some newly-spawned bass reaching greater than 9 inches by the fall.

Ultimately, continued sampling will be necessary to determine the overall contribution of stocked largemouth bass to the population at ages 1-3. The second stocking of largemouth bass will occur in June 2008.

For more information about the Ohio River largemouth bass stocking study, please contact Doug Henley at (502) 858-1549 ext. 362.





## GREENWING YOUTH HUNT AT BALLARD WMA

Deputy Commissioner Hank Patton (rear of top left photo) helped guide a recent Greenwing contingent in a successful waterfowl hunt at the Ballard Wildlife Management Area last weekend. Jacob Baumann and Paul Jeanmougin joined Patton and Dave Frederick in the blind and also showed off their successes (left).

### "Cedar Creek Lake," continued

May). The number of bass fishing trips was highest during the summer (May-July).

An estimated 10,000 fishing trips occurred at Cedar Creek Lake in 2005 (43 percent of all trips targeted largemouth bass). Fishing pressure was estimated at approximately 50 hours per acre.

Ninety-seven percent of all trips were by Kentucky residents, with 82% of people fishing by boat. Other sport fish species present at Cedar Creek Lake include channel catfish, crappie, bluegill, and redear sunfish.

Cedar Creek Lake is the first sport fishery resource in the Commonwealth to be managed solely for trophy largemouth bass production. This project represents

the largest capital construction project for the KDFWR and one of the largest Sport Fish Restoration projects in the South-eastern United States.

For more information about trophy largemouth bass fishing at Cedar Creek Lake, please contact District Fisheries Biologists John Williams or Marcy Anderson (606-549-1332) or Ryan Oster (800-858-1549 ext. 353).



## New personnel recruitment system launched

State government has launched a new web-based system for recruiting and applying for vacant positions, known as Career Opportunities System or COS.

The new Career Opportunities System (COS) was rolled out to the public on November 26, 2007 and major changes have been made to our application process.

Some of these changes are of minimal impact (for instance, the terms "requisition" and "register" are interchangeable) while others are of higher impact (candidates must now self nominate themselves for each and every position of interest).

### How does COS affect you?

If a KDFWR employee is interested in applying for a vacant position, he/she must complete an online application (no more paper applications!) and submit that application to the position of interest. You can also complete your online application and save it for future use.

To assist in the new online application process, contact the Personnel Cabinet at (502) 564-8030 to obtain copies of your previous applications as this new application must include your complete work history. Online help is available via email or real time chat.

Computers are available at the Personnel Cabinet from 7:30 – 3:00 Monday-Friday and employees are there to assist if needed. You can learn more about this new process by accessing the online tutorial at <http://personnel.ky.gov/employment/meritsystem.htm#overview>.

As always, our own Personnel Section within the Administrative Services Division is available for assistance as well."

## 6TH DISTRICT YOUTH GAME BIRD HUNT



Sixth District Conservation officers joined with Joe Martin for what most believe will become an annual event at Martin's Shooting Preserve in Casey County. The youth hunted birds, shot clay targets and ate. Martin donated the grounds and the birds while the officers supplied guns, shells, food and guidance.

